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ABSTRACT

The Lexicalist-interpretive approach to inalienable possession adopted in this paper proposes that body parts are generated with either the article (the unmarked determiner) or the possessive adjective (the marked determiner). The unmarked body part is codesignate with the indirect object; in the case of pseudo-transitives--a clearly delimited group which constitutes an exception to the rule--codesignation occurs between the body part and the sentence subject. Possessive adjectives are coreference marked by the same mechanism whether they modify body parts or other possessions. This is justified, as there is no syntactic distinction between alienable and inalienable objects once modified by possessive adjectives. (Author)

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An Interpretive Approach to Inalienable Possession in French

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In French the distinction between alienable and inalienable possession is usually manifested by the presence of the possessive adjective or definite article respectively. The glass of sentences (1) and (2) being alienable, takes a possessive adjective, while the arm and hands of sentences (3), (4), and (5) being inalienable, require the definite article.

- (1) Elle a cassé le verre de Jean/ son verre.
'She broke John's glass/ his glass.'
- (2) Elle a lavé le verre de Jean/ son verre.
'She washed John's glass/ his glass.'
- (3) Elle a cassé le bras à Jean. Elle lui a cassé le bras.
'She broke John's arm. She broke his arm.'
- (4) Elle s'est lavé les mains.
'She washed her hands.'
- (5) Elle a levé la main.
'She raised her hand'

Usually the possessor is indicated by an indirect object pronoun, either reflexive (as se in sentence (4), 's'est lavé') or non-reflexive (as lui in sentences (3), (11), and (18)). Some verbs have no indirect object possessor (as lever in sentence (5), or avoir in (6)).

(6) Il a la tête qui tourne. 'He has a dizzy head.'

(7) La tête lui tourne. 'His head is spinning.'

This apparent alternation has led to the formulation of rules such as this one (Grevisse, 1961: 348-349) 'On remplace l'adjectif possessif par l'article défini quand le rapport de possession est assez nettement indiqué par le sens général de la phrase, notamment devant les noms désignant les parties du corps ou du vêtement, les facultés de l'âme, et dans certaines expressions toutes faites d'un sens général.' Hatcher indicates, however, that the dichotomy is not as strict as has been suggested; rather than two classes in complementary distribution, there is an overlapping of alienable and inalienable possession. The use of the possessive adjective with a body part is permitted as a stylistic variation (as in sentences (8)-(9), which correspond to (4) and (5)).

(8) Elle a lavé ses mains. 'She washed her hands.'

(9) Elle a levé sa main. 'She raised her hand.'

The possessive adjective is required when the body part is modified by an adjective:

(10) Il s'est lavé ses jolies mains blanches.
'He washed his pretty white hands.'

(11) Il a levé sa jolie main blanche.
'He raised his pretty white hand.'

This paper will examine two generative treatments of possession in French, the Transformational and the Lexicalist-interpretive. The transformational accounts of Langacker and Fillmore will be compared to a model based on Jackendoff's treatment of English possession. Central to this analysis are two problems, the use of the definite article, and the role of the indirect object possessor. The first problem presupposes a framework which defines the relationship of alienable and inalienable possession, according to which one may assign a definite article or possessive adjective. The same framework provides a response to the second problem which concerns the presence of the indirect object with certain verbs and its absence with others.

Langacker attempts to reduce a wide variety of data--possessive adjectives and pronouns, inalienable possessives, and NP complement possessives--to a single source, relative clauses containing être à plus the possessor. This source is based on the à NP complement constructions exemplified in (12)-(14).

- (12) Son livre à lui. 'His book'
- (13) Elle a rencontré un ami à Jean.
'She met a friend of John's.'
- (14) la femme aux yeux bleus ('the woman with blue eyes'); le canard à l'orange ('orange duck'); la maison à quatre étages ('the four-storied house').

The surface forms are derived by several transformations, one of which is Possessor Deletion, the transformation which differentiates verbs that manifest an indirect object possessor (sentences (3), (4), (11), (18)) and verbs which do not take an indirect object possessor ((5), (6)). This rule ⁵says Langacker 'applies when the verb denotes an action by the body part in question . . . the dative construction is used when the verb indicates an action applied to the body part in question' (Langacker, 1968: 65). Two shortcomings of Langacker's analysis which are symptomatic of the transformational approach, are his proposal of être à as the sole relative clause source of all possessives, and his Possessor Deletion transformation.

Langacker groups as equivalent three à NP categories which have être à as the source: first, dative à NP (that is, any à NP which can be pronominalized to an indirect object pronoun such as lui in (3) and (7); second, adnominal à NP (as in (14)); and third, emphatic possessor à NP ((12)-(13)). The possessive à NP complements of (12)-(13) are not necessarily related to the à NP complements of (14) which correspond generally to English 'with NP' or adjectival NP, rather than to any possessive. The à NP nominal modifier of (14) is a common and productive form, whereas être à as a possessive construction (as in (12)-(13)) is archaic

and unproductive. The relation of à NP and de NP possessives will be discussed below. Moreover, dative à and the NP complement à are syntactically distinct with respect to Pronominalization and Cleft-formation: the sentences in (3)/(16) are grammatical while those of (15)/(17) are not.

(15) *Elle lui a rencontré un ami. 'She met him a friend.'

(16) C'est à Jean qu'elle a cassé le bras.
'It's John whose arm she broke.'

(17) *C'est à Jean qu'elle a rencontré un ami.
'It's John (to) whom she met a friend.'

The à NP of (13) (which is the source of (15)/(17)) is not directly dominated by VP (as is the dative NP of (3)) because it can be neither clitic placed nor fronted. These similar surface forms are merely accidental homophones.

The rule of Possessor Deletion is unsupported for three reasons. First, it is not syntactically motivated; according to Langacker's argument, it is only the inference of possession which would lead one to posit an underlying possessor in (5). Second, since it must apply obligatorily, it is impossible to derive (6)-(9); there is no provision at all for possessive adjectives with body parts. Last, the distinction between an action by the body part and an action applied to a body part is not clear: in 'se laver les mains' of sentence (4) the hands both perform and receive action; certain verbs such as manquer in sentence (18)) are

accompanied by a dative pronoun, although there is no real action performed on the body part.

- (18) Il lui manque l'oreille guache. L'oreille ^{au} guache
lui manque.
'His left ear is missing.'

Fillmore maintains the alienable/inalienable dichotomy by distinguishing the alienable genitive (1), (2) derived from a sentence containing "have" (or "be with") embedded under the possessed NP, from the inalienable genitive (3-5) derived from a Fillmorian dative NP complement. If one were to assume a French derivation with à parallel to his English derivation with of, the resulting sentences would have the indirect object possessor embedded under the body part, as in Langacker's analysis. It has been shown that this is not tenable since dative à NP's must be dominated by VP. Fillmore thus distinguishes in surface structure between the normal dative dominated by P (his highest node) and the inalienable dative dominated by NP, when both behave identically with respect to Clitic Placement and Cleft Formation.

If the NP complement dative is realized on the surface as a daughter of the objective (body part) NP, Fillmore's analysis encounters the same difficulties as Lanacker's être à; inalienable dative possessors and à NP complement possessors are not the same. But if the inalienable dative is a deep Fillmorian dative, there is no underlying distinction among various datives. Finally, his rules can not

generate sentences (8)-(10), since no provision is made for such variation.

Langacker and Fillmore treat inalienable body parts as a sub-class of possessed objects; the evidence for such an association is much stronger in English than in French. The only surface forms in French which offer justification for an underlying possessor are those of (10) and (11), but neither Fillmore nor Langacker considers this evidence. A more adequate transformational analysis would posit an underlying possessor which would be deleted except in cases such as (10)-(11). In order to consistently treat inalienable possession (whether the verb takes an indirect object or not), and to correctly predict a sentence such as (10) (which has both an indirect object reflexive pronoun and a possessive adjective), the possessor would be generated as well as, not in alternation with the indirect object. There is no syntactic justification (such as Pronominalization or Cleft Formation) to identify the indirect object possessor with a possessor embedded under the body part (as in (12)-(13)). Body parts with articles (as in sentences (4) and (5)) would have a different relative clause source than those with possessive adjectives (as in sentences (8) and (9)); the former would contain a full NP possessor which would always be deleted. There is no syntactic clue

to the underlying difference between definite article and possessive adjective in sentences (4) and (8) or (5) and (9), and the semantic difference is too subtle to be characterized. While the body part plus possessive adjective of (8) and (9) might have a relative source identical to other inalienable possessives, it is unclear what that source would be. It is yet more difficult to posit a second distinct relative clause source for sentences (4) and (5) with definite article.

Possession is a syntactic manifestation of a variety of semantic relations. Jackendoff (1974: 48) says: 'One might with good reason try to interpret possession as a special type of intrinsic connection: there seems little justification to syntactically distinguish own or have from build or write purely for the purpose of stating a reduction transformation, when a suitable semantic generalization might eliminate the reduction rule altogether.'

Developing ideas proposed by Chomsky, Jackendoff suggests an alternative to the Transformational approach, a Lexicalist treatment of possession. 'One projection rule for the possessive position can specify a rather loose notion of "intrinsic connection" between the possessive NP and the object denoted by the larger NP. This notion would be sharpened by the semantic nature of the larger NP'

(Jackendoff, 1974: 7). Chomsky argues that inalienable possessives in English cannot be derived from reduced relatives because of the ungrammaticality of '*the leg John has hurts'; inalienable possessives must then be generated as such in the base. Jackendoff presents further evidence for a prenominal possessive generated in the base in other cases of supposed relative clause reduction such as 'John's book' from 'the book that John wrote' or 'the book John owns.' 'John's book' has multiple relative clause sources for the same surface form, if one accepts the relative clause derivation of possessives. The relative clause derivation violates the recoverability condition on deletion transformations, since different sources are neutralized in surface structure. The arguments of Chomsky and Jackendoff find yet stronger justification in French. There is no grammatical relative clause which could be the source of 'ses mains' in sentence (8). There is even less evidence for a relative clause source of 'la main' in sentence (5), since there is no surface possessor.

Kayne (1975: 160-170) agrees with the distinction between dative à NP and adnominal à NP, concluding that 'the dative is generated independently of les mains, and les mains is generated without an adnominal possessive complement' (Kayne, 1975: 169). He suggests that

'the interpretation under which le bras, la main are understood as belonging to lui, elle, could be attributed to a rule that associates such "inalienable" NPs with the appropriate pronoun (or NP . . .)' (Kayne, 1975: 316). He thus distinguishes sharply between inalienables, and NPs accompanied by a possessive adjective. As Langacker, he derives the latter from adnominal à NP complements, using as evidence for this source the emphatic possessive of (12)-(13). He points out that the class of clitic pronouns corresponds to 'precisely those pronouns that are subject to the transformation involved in the derivation of possessive' (Kayne, 1975: 194).

While the emphatic possessive does use à, possessive adjectives in French usually correspond to de NP for all nominals.

- (19) le livre de Jean/ son livre ('John's book/'his book'); la destruction de la ville/ sa destruction ('the destruction of the city/'its destruction'); la critique de Jean/ sa critique ('John's/ his criticism')

Kayne (1975: 196) says 'Whether these de phrase should be derived from à phrases is an open question.' His analysis uses a modified-transformational approach (that is, transformational, but not from a relative clause source) which offers no advantage over a strictly interpretive one. Because every possessive adjective would derive from adnominal

à NP, structures such as that in (20) should be possible, but are not.

- (20) la destruction de la ville; ?sa destruction
à elle

Indeed, emphatic possessives are only normal with human possessors. The examples in (19) indicate that despite a variety of semantic sources the possessive adjective in French generally corresponds to de NP. To account for the data of (19) and (20) under Kayne's hypothesis, it would be necessary to postulate not only an à to de transformation, but a constraint to prevent (20). An interpretive analysis would have possessive adjectives generated in the base in prenominal position, associated with a de NP possessor. A possible treatment of emphatics would be to postpose a copy of the pronoun (which would acquire its usual tonic form in non-clitic position) and to insert à. The Lexicalist approach proposes interpretation rather than transformation in cases of both inalienable and alienable possession.

According to the Lexicalist position, in English both alienable and inalienable possessive adjectives would be generated in the base, and the difference between them would be handled by interpretive rules. In French inalienable possessions would not usually take possessive adjectives, but could be generated with them. The definite article would be the unmarked, normal, determiner of body parts, and the possessive adjective would be the marked determiner.

The problem is not one of mutually excluding two categories (alienable/inalienable), but of delineating alternative readings. The marked body part behaves syntactically like any other possessive adjective plus NP.

The interpretive rule--which Kayne mentions but does not define--relating the inalienable possessed object to the possessor, establishes what will be referred to as "co-designation" (traditionally called coreference when speaking of pronouns and possessive adjectives). Codesignation is established usually between the unmarked body part and the surface indirect object. This object is always the possessor regardless of the syntactic position of the body part in the sentence. In sentences (3) and (4) the body part is the direct object, in sentence (7) the subject, in sentence (18) the subject or direct object, and in (21) and (22) the object of a preposition.

- (21) Le vent lui soufflait au visage.
'The wind blew in his face.'

- (22) Il lui plongea le poignard dans le coeur.
'He plunged the dagger into his/her heart.'

Yet unexplained is codesignation in sentences such as (5) and (23) where there is no apparent possessor.

- (23) Elle lui passa les bras autour du cou.
'She put her arms around his neck.'

Lever and passer belong to a group of verbs which are 'pseudo-transitive' when constructed with a body part which is necessarily the surface direct object. Unlike verbs such

as laver which retain the same semantic and syntactic relations with body parts or other objects, the pseudo-transitives change perspective and acquire a 'middle-voice' interpretation. This is verifiable in intransitive constructions and in reflexive middle voice paraphrases comparable to (24).

- (24) On achète le pain à la boulangerie.
'One buys bread at the bakery.'

Le pain s'achète à la boulangerie.
'Bread is bought at the bakery.'

The two sentences of (25) are equivalent and grammatical, whereas the parallel sentences of (26) do not have a grammatical middle voice reading with the verb laver.

- (25) Il baissa son front. Son front se baissa.
'He lowered his forehead.' 'His forehead lowered.'

- (26) Il lava ses mains. *Ses mains se lavèrent.
'He washed his hands.' 'His hands (were) washed.'

(27) presents a pseudo-transitive which has a middle voice paraphrase either as a reflexive or as an intransitive.

- (27) Ses membres (se) raidissent.
'His members stiffen.'

Another characteristic shared by this group of verbs is the fact that their corresponding nominals represent an intransitive action by the body part. Usually verb related nominals describe the action of the subject of the verb, for both transitives and intransitives.

- (28) la prise, quelqu'un prend
 la manipulation, quelqu'un manipule
 l'éblouissement, quelque chose éblouit
 le raidissement, quelque chose (se) raidit

This evidence supports the view that these verbs are not true transitives when constructed with a direct object.

The pseudo-transitives are not unlike causatives. Chomsky (1970: 215) says 'We postulate that there is a feature [+cause] which can be assigned to certain verbs as a lexical property. . . . An intransitive with the feature [+cause] becomes transitive and . . . its selectional features are systematically revised so that the former subject becomes the object.' A feature [+middle] might distinguish the lexical group in question here; a transitive with the feature [+middle] would acquire a middle voice semantic reading with the body part coreferent with the verb's subject. The question of relating this to the reflexive middle voice is not of concern here. The question is a complex one, since the middle voice reading ^{may result} ~~can hold~~ if the verb is reflexive or intransitive.

The evidence grouping these verbs is mainly semantic, since they manifest the same syntactic behavior as verbs constructed with the indirect object with body parts. A body part cannot be the subject of a passive sentence.

- (29) *Ses/Les mains (lui) ont été lavées par Jean.
 'His hands were washed by John.'
- (30) *Sa/La main a été levée par Jean.
 'His hand was raised by John.'

Pronominalization applies in both groups.

(31) Elle se les est lavées. (les mains)
'She washed them (her hands).'

(32) Elle l'a levée. (la main)
'She raised it (her hand).'

Cleft formation is strange, but may apply in certain cases of pseudo-transitives.

(33) ?C'est la main qu'elle a levée.
'It's her hand that she raised.'

(34) ?Ce sont les mains qu'elle s'est lavées.
'It's her hands that she washed.'

(35) C'est le bras qu'il lui cassé.
'It's his/her arm that he broke.'

The following list of pseudo-transitives includes avoir, which is similar to the other verbs only in its codesignation pattern.

agiter	crisper	étirer	plier
allonger	croiser	fermer	raidir
avancer	creuser	hausser	redresser
avoir	desserrer	hocher	relever
baisser	détourner	incliner	rejeter
balancer	dodeliner	jeter	remuer
bomber	dresser	joindre	renverser
bouger	écarquiller	lever	secouer
branler	écarter	montrer	serrer
brider	élever	ouvrir	tendre
claquer	enfler	passer	tourner
contracter	étendre	pencher	traîner

With pseudo-transitives the direct object body part always belongs to the subject of the sentence. When the body part is subject of a sentence with a middle voice reading, the body part must be accompanied by a possessive

adjective (as in sentence (25)), as there is no possessor with which to codesignate. The codesignation convention which pairs the body part with the indirect object, except in cases of pseudo-transitives, correctly predicts possession in all the sentences presented. The sentences which pair the body part with the indirect object are (3), (4), (11), (18), (21), and (22). Lever of sentence (5) and avoir of sentence (10) are pseudo-transitive, and thus pair the body part with the sentence subject. In sentence (23) passer requires les bras to be paired with the subject, because the arms are the direct object of a pseudo-transitive verb, while le cou is paired with the indirect object. Excluded from this marking convention are appositives (36) and locatives ((37), (38)).

(36) Il m'écoute, la tête baissée.
'He listens to me, his head bowed.'

(37) Il a un crayon à la main.
'He has a pencil in his hand.'

(38) Il l'a blessé au bras.
'He injured him on the arm.'

In these cases the body parts' relation to the possessor is not dependent on the verb, and will not be treated here.

Although the possessive adjective can have an extra-sentential antecedent, the inalienable article--as the reflexive pronoun--can be codesignated only within a simplex sentence. Proof of this is found in factitive sentences.

Sentences (39)-(40) present one of several verbs which require the factitive when constructed with a body part.

(39) Pierre a fait craquer ses articulations.
'Peter cracked his knuckles.'

(40) *Pierre a fait craquer les articulations.
'Peter cracked his knuckles.'

Factitive constructions do not allow the subject of faire to be the subject of the lower sentence; there is no sentence such as 'he made himself do something' constructed with faire. In sentence (40) the unmarked body part is ungrammatical because codesignation has no possessor NP on which to operate in the lower sentence. Because the body part is the subject of the lower intransitive sentence, 'his knuckles crack,' it must be accompanied by a possessive adjective. The possessive adjective of (39) can be coreference marked in the higher sentence after having been raised. If it is possible to codesignate in the lower sentence (as in sentences (41) and (43)), the resulting sentence is acceptable.

(41) Jean a fait lever la tête à Marie.
'John made Mary raise her head.'

(42) *Jean a fait lever la tête.
'John made the head raise.'

(43) Jean s'est fait laver les mains.
'John had his hands washed.'

(43) is grammatical because it is possible to codesignate in the lower sentence between la tête and Marie with the pseudo-transitive verb laver. Codesignation is impossible

in (42). Kayne (1975: 311-327) presents examples of unusual behavior of inalienables in factitive constructions. A complete discussion of factitives is beyond the scope of this paper.

The Lexicalist-interpretive approach to inalienable possession adopted in this paper proposes that body parts are generated with either the article (the unmarked determiner) or the possessive adjective (the marked determiner). The unmarked body part is codesignate with the indirect object; in the case of pseudo-transitives--a clearly delimited group which constitutes an exception to the rule--codesignation occurs between the body part and the sentence subject. Possessive adjectives are coreference marked by the same mechanism whether they modify body parts or other possessions. This is justified, as there is no syntactic distinction between alienable and inalienable objects once modified by possessive adjectives.

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